

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5765

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USNATO

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, YO, AL

SUBJECT: ALBANIAN - YUGOSLAV RELATIONS -- PROBLEMS

REF : A. STATE 039543 B. BELGRADE 1066

1. SUMMARY. EMBASSY APPRECIATES DEPARTMENT'S COMMENTS
REF A ON OUR REPORTING ON DETERIORATING IN ALBANIAN-
YUGOSLAV RELATIONS AND SITUATION OF ALBANIAN MINORITY IN
YUGOSLAVIA. WE PLACING INCREASING EMPHASIS ON THIS SUBJECT,
INCLUDING REQUESTED APPOINTMENTS FOR POLITICAL OFFICER
WITH OFFICIALS IN PRISTINA MID-MARCH. AND IN RECENT
DAYS WE HAVE DISCUSSED CURRENT SITUATION WITH WELL-
INFORMED YUGOSLAF JOURNALIST AND FSFA OFFICIAL, AND WITH
SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER. END SUMMARY.

2. YUGOSLAV PRESIDENCY MADE "HARD DECISIONS" REGARDING
RELATIONS WITH ALBANIA LAST WEEK, ACCORDING TO YUGOSLAV
JOURNALIST SPECIALIZING IN FOREIGN AFFAIRS. PRESS
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REPORTS THAT PRESIDENCY MET ON FEBRUARY 19 AND DISCUSSED

SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. USUALLY CANDID
OFFICIAL OF FEDERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (FSFA)
WITH DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALBANIA BLANCED WHEN
ASKED ABOUT NEW DECISIONS. HE DENIED THAT ANY MAJOR
CHANGE IN OVERALL GOY POLICY OF GOOD RELATIONS IS IN
THE OFFING, BUT SAID THAT COOPERATION IN SPECIFIC AREAS
LIKE TRADE AND CULTURE MUST BE A TWO-WAY STREET AND
LEFT IMPRESSION WITH POL COUNS THAT GOY MAY BE PLANNING
SOEMTHING.

3. WHILE JOURNALIST WOULD NOT SAY WHAT DECISIONS WERE,
HE CRYPTICALLY EXPRESSED FEAR THAT GOY UNDERESTIMATES
DANGER OF TAKEOVER BY PRO-SOVIET ELEMENTS IN ALBANIA.
HE THINKS PRESENT ANTI-YUGOSLAV CAMPAIGN IN ALBANIA
IS RESULT OF SHIFT IN INTERNAL POWER BALCNE, THERE SINCE
FISHING BOAT INCIDENT OF DECEMBER 15 WAS HANDLED QUIETLY
FOR THE FIRST SEVERAL WEEKS.

4. FSFA OFFICIAL CONFIRMS GOY DOES NOT CONSIDER DANGER
OF PRO-SOVIET TAKEOVER GREAT. WHILE HE AGREES INTERNAL
FACTORS EXPLAIN CURRENT ALBANIAN CAMPAIGN AGAINST
YUGOSLAVIA, HE SEES HOXHA IN CONSOLIDATION STAGE OF TWO-
YEAR LONG STRUGGLE NOT AGAINST PRO-SOVIET BUT TECHNOCRATIC,
MODERNIZING, OUTWARD LOOKING FORCES--SOME OF WHOM FIND
YUGOSLAV BRAND OF SOCIALISM ATTRACTIVE AND ALL OF WHOM
WANT A LESS ISOLATED COUNTRY. GOY FEELS RELATIONS WITH
ALBANIA WILL ALWAYS BE LIMITED AND PERIODICALLY DIFFICULT
AS LONG AS HOXHA IN POWER. YUGOSLAVS TRACE ALBANIA'S
BREAK WITH SOVIET UNION TO STALINIST - ERA HOXHA'S INABILITY
TO REPUDIATE A PAST IN WHICH HE THOROUGHLY IMPLICATED,
AND FOLLOW KRUSHCHEV'S LEAD IN MAKING UP WITH YUGOSLAVIA.
IN ADDITION TO POLITICAL STRUGGLE HOXHA FACES DIFFICULT
ECONOMIC SITUATION AT PRESENT. THUS GOY SEES HIM TRYING
TO PLAY ON NATIONALIST SENTIMENTS OVER BOAT INCIDENT
TO GENERATE POPULAR SUPPORT.

5. SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICER, WITH OBVIOUS INTEREST IN DOING
SO, TOLD CHARGE FISHING BOAT INCIDENT WAS A DELIBERATE
PROVOCATION ON THE PART OF THE ALBANIANS AND THAT
THE ALBANIAN BOAT CAPTAIN HAD TRIED TO RAM YUGOSLAV
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BOAT (FSFA OFFICIAL SAYS ALBANIAN RAMMING ATTEMPT INDEED
MADE BUT ONLY AFTER GOY PATROL BOAT HAD ATTEMPTED TO
HALT ALBANIAN CRAFT). YUGOSLAV-ALBANIAN RELATIONS WERE
AT THE LOWEST POINT IN MANY YEARS AND THIS COULD NOT BE
ATTRIBUTABLE SOLELY TO GUIDANCE THE ALBANIANS MIGHT BE
SETTING FROM THE PRC. HE IMPLIED THAT THE FRICTION BETWEEN
THAT ALBANIAN POPULATIONS OF KOSOVO AND THE SERBS WAS RUNNING
EXTREMELY HIGH AND THAT THE ALBANIANS WERE BEGINNING TO

FEAR SOME KIND OF YUGOSLAV MORE AGAINST THEM. HE HIMSELF
DISCOUNTED THIS EVENTUALITY FOR THE MOMENT BUT SAID HE
COULD NOT SAY HOW THE SITUATION COULD BE CONTAINED IN
THE FUTURE. HE NOTED IN PASSING THE HOXHA COULD NOT BE
ALL THAT ANTI-SOVIET BECAUSE "THERE IS STILL A STATUE OF
STALING IN TIRANA AND, AFTER ALL, THEY DO NOT HAVE ONE IN
YUGOSLAVIA."

6. WHILE WE UNABLE AT THIS POINT TO CONFIRM SOVIET
STATEMENT THAT FRICITION BETWEEN SERBS AND LOCAL ALBANIAN
POPULATIONS RUNNING "EXTREMELY" HIGH IN KOSOVO ITSELF,
OPEN EXPRESSIONS OF DISLIKE FOR KOSOVO-ALBANIANS AND
BURDEN THEY REPRESENT IS NOT UNCOMMON TOPIC OF CONVERSATION
IN BELGRADE THESE DAYS. ADVISER TO FLIGOROV TOLD CHARGE
QUESTION OF HOW MUCH DEVELOPED REPUBLICS WOULD GIVE KOSOVO
WAS MOST DIFFICULT ISSUE IN FIVE YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN.
SLOVENIAN TRANSLATOR IN SKUPSHINA TOLD POL COUNS
SLOVENIAN DELEGATION WAS EXTREMELY AGITATED ON THIS ISSUE
AND HARSH WORDS EXCHANGED, AND WE HER FROM SOME HIGHLY-PLACED
YUGOSLAVS ASSERTIONS THAT MONEY HAS BEEN POURED INTO KOSOVO FOR
YEARS WITH NO RESULT, THAT ALBANIANS ARE TOO LAZY TO
WORK, ETC. ON OTHER SIDE OF LEDGER, UNEMPLOYMENT IN
KOSOVO IS HIGHEST IN COUNTRY, DISPARITIES IN STANDARD
OF LIVING ARE GLARING DEVELOPMENT GAT NOT CLOSING AND ALBANIAN PARTY
LEADER BAKALI
FEELS COMPELLED TO MAKE INPSSIONED SPEECHES ABOUT
HIS REPUBLIC'S NEED FOR HELP.

7. OF COURSE ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON BOTH SERB-ALBANIAN
RELATIONS IN KOSOVO AND LARGER YUGOSLAV-ALBANIAN
RELATIONSHIP ARE JAILING OF 19 IRREDENTISTS "STALINISTS"
(WE UNDERSTAND ANOTHER GROUP NOW ON TRIAL FOR OPENLY
ADVOCATING INDEPENDENCE AND SLANDERING TITO) AND YUGOSLAVIA'S
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RECENT ANTI-STALINIST, ANTI-COMINFORMIST CAMPAIGN
IN GENERAL. AS JANUARY 22ND ARTICLE "STALIN
WAS AND REMAINS A GREAT MARXIST-LENIST" IN TIRANA'S
"ZERI I POPULIT" MAKES CLEAR, HOXHA SEES ANY ATTACK ON
STALIN AS AN ATTACK ON HIM. ARTICLE REVERSES ALL
YUGOSLAVIA'S ARGUMENTS, CHARGING THAT YUGOSLAVIA'S INTERNAL
DIFFICULTIES HAVE LED THEM TO "CHAUVINISM...INTERVENTION
IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHERS...TO ACCUSE A CERTAIN
NATIONALITY OF IRREDENTISM... TO CONCEAL THE INJUSTICES AND TO
SURPRESS THE PURE AND LEGITIMATE NATIONAL FEELING OF THE
PEOPLE".

8. COMMENT: THE WHOLE SITUATION WITHIN YUGOSLAVIA AND KOSOVO
AND BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND ALBANIA IS OVERWHELMINGLY
REDOLENT OF THE NORTH-SOUTH, DC-LDC, COLONIAL ANTI-

IMPERIALIST STRUGGLE WHICH THE YUGOSLAVS SO SIRHTEOUSLY
CASTIGATE US WITH AT THE UN AND ELSEWHERE. IT COULDN'S
HAVE HAPPENED TO A NICER GOVERNMENT.
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